STAINED GLASS.

At a meeting of the Decorative Art Society, on the 27th ult., Mr. Fildes in the chair, Mr. E. Cooper, in resuming the subject of his paper "On Stained Glass Windows," observed, that a combination of the Italian, or renaissance, with gothic embellishment, took place during the reign of Henry VIII., as seen in the chapel of Bishop West, at Ely, and in Wolsey's hall, at Hampton Court, whilst, indeed, the pure Italian architectural design by Torregiano, in the tomb of Henry VII., as well as the windows, carved stalls, and organ-screen, in King's College Chapel, Cambridge, belong to this period. Some fine examples of Italian decorations, in the paintings by Holbein, at Hampton Court, were also referred to. He enlarged upon these circumstances, lest he might be supposed to have anticipated by a century the introduction of the revival more usually attributed to Inigo Jones. A detailed description of the windows at King's College, Cambridge, followed; and the east window of Saint Margaret's church, Westminster, was, in his opinion, designed by the same artist: an examination of this window will convey a correct notion of those at Cambridge. It was said, that this had been executed at Gouda, in Holland; at which place may be seen some of the finest examples of stained glass in existence: they are in the style of the revival, with a considerable portion of white glass in the background, and were painted towards the end of the sixteenth century. Some elaborate engravings of them, just completed by Mr. Weale, were referred to. The eastern window of Saint George's, Hanover-square, is also of this period. Much of the detail was said to be valuable, although a confused effect arises from the ornamental portion overpowering the figures.

Mr. Cooper then remarked, that the windows of the sixteenth century have a peculiar character in the imperfectly attained perspective effects, and the attempts to represent distances by painting; hence exhibiting a departure from the true principles of the art. He observed, that all figures should be supported by draperied or diapered back-grounds, admitting depth in colour. The windows of King's College chapel might be considered beautiful, rather from the rich colours of the glass than from the artistic merit in the application of colours to the design, which can only be made out after some little study. During the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth centuries, one uniform tone of colour pervaded the back-ground; and as one of the finest examples of this class, the window of the north transept of Canterbury Cathedral was referred to. It displays a glowing brilliancy not subsequently attained.

In the reign of Elizabeth, stained glass was largely introduced in mansions, exhibiting heraldic devices and mottos. The seventeenth century led to a notice of several windows by Van Linge, that in Lincoln's-inn chapel being a good example of this artist's productions. Others were enumerated, which belong to the eighteenth century, but they were not considered worthy of commendation, having been, for the most part, treated as an oil-painting, and with a preponderance of shadow on a transparent medium. At the present day, Mr. Cooper observed, there is a return to the practice of medieval glaziers, in the employment of flashed glass and potmetals together with minute lead-work. The east window of Saint James's Church, Piccadilly, he thought creditable in respect of glazing and richness of tone in the colours; but a higher degree of artistic merit might have been readily obtained. A proper gradation of colour in the composition had not been observed; the most elevated figure, viz., that of the Saviour ascending, being inconsistently clothed in scarlet, and which, the reader argued, should have been represented in drapery of the most aerial description. Much controversy and criticism had taken place upon the character of this window. He said that he could not detect any Gothic details in the window as executed; that the borders are Italian, from works by Raffaelle, G. Romano, and others, and may be seen in Gruner's work. The borders of mosaic-work impart a Byzantine feeling, whilst the various symbols and emblems introduced were commonly employed by the early Italian Christians. He considered that we may expect success in direct imitations of the medieval works, as seen in new windows in the Temple Church, where the colours and glazing are alike good, and the tableaux, or subjects, being small, do not render any impropriety of intensity conspicuously objectionable.

The east window of the new church in Wilton-place was next noticed as a misunderstanding of this kind of decoration. It is not yet completed; but in the lower portion a failure was said to be clearly indicated. The intention of the designer, the writer supposed to be akin to those prevalent during the transition period, when the introduction of a series of small and separate subjects illustrative of history was aimed at; but omitting the principal charm arising from the harmonious and rich glow emanating from a combination of full-toned colours. The figures in this window were then described as small, on light or white grounds, producing a spotted effect from their size, and also precluding the possibility of readily making out the subject; added to which, each figure, or group, is surmounted by tabernacle-work in pale yellow glass, feebly contrasting with the stone mullions of the window. He then argued, that one of two rules should be observed,—either a rich general effect should be produced (the design or subjects being subordinate), or the subject should be well defined, and sufficiently large to be well understood in any part of the building. Neither of which had been regarded in this last instance.

One great cause of failures at the present day was attributed to the art being regarded as a mere trade; and it was contended, that were artists of eminent talent to devote attention to the principles which regulated the application of colour to this material, we might soon realize our brightest expectations. Much might be hoped for from the great advance taking place in chemical information. The writer suggested improvements that he believed had not yet been applied to stained-glass windows. One was, to introduce "lights" in the representation of objects. Shadow had been freely used, but he argued, that dark shadowing constitutes a great fault. The best effects in a picture generally arise from the lights. By using flashed glass and a partial removal of the coloured surface these might be produced. Another plan by double glazing was mentioned, using two plates of flashed glass of different colours, and subjected to certain modifications by grinding or acid. Specimens illustrating these considerations were exhibited.

By these and other means that might be suggested, together with an avoidance of aerial perspective, a superior pictorial effect would result; and he concluded his paper by a brief recapitulation of the leading characteristics of the design and colouring peculiar to each of the centuries which had been passed under review.

THE LIGHT AND HEALTH TAX.

A very numerous deputation of Members of Parliament and delegates attended Lord John Russell on the 29th ult. to solicit a total repeal of the window-tax. Lord Duncan, Mr. G. Daniell, Mr. Hume, Sir de Lacy Evans, Mr. Benj. Hall, Mr. Roebuck, Mr. Pattison, Mr. Masterman, and others, addressed the premier at considerable length. Mr. Hume shewed the position in which the question of the window duties stood when the present Government was last in office, and when he (Mr. Hume) withdrew a motion he had given notice of for the total repeal of the window-tax, on a promise being made by Lord Althorp that in the following year half the tax should be abolished, but which, on account of the low state of the finances of the country, was not carried out.

Lord John Russell observed in reply, that what had fallen from the members of so highly influential and respectable a deputation must necessarily command his serious consideration. He could assure them his attention should be directed to all the arguments adduced with the greatest care. He would, however, only remark, that he feared, if he should repeal this tax, there would be other parties pressing upon him, declaring that other taxes were equally obnoxious.

The deputation then withdrew, as little satisfied with the result as deputations usually are.

FOREIGN ARCHITECTURAL AND COLLATERAL INTELLIGENCE.

Bridge Construction.—System Neville.—Mr. N., builder of the Seine-bridge of Bezons, which has been open to traffic for the last two years, has of late experimented on a bridge on a new system, of which we collect the following details. The bridge is situated on the North Line at Brussels, and has an opening of 22 mètres. It is of cast-iron, and the experiments were made under the eyes of a commission, named for this purpose by government. The first train passing consisted of the engine and its tender, to which were attached four waggons, each loaded with a weight of 5,000 kilogrammes—the weight of the waggons averaging 2,500 kilogrammes each. Next, *two* trains like the former (two engines and eight waggons) were started simultaneously, but in an opposite direction, so as to pass each other on the bridge. Another set of experiments consisted in letting pass two engines, one after the other, on the same rail; then four engines, of which every two were attached to each other. They also passed in an opposite direction, and met on the bridge. Ultimately, each pair of engines was attached to four waggons, loaded as above. Two engines were then stationed on one rail of the bridge, while on the other, two engines and four waggons were passing.

The above experiments were made at a slow, and a very rapid speed. Moreover, when two locomotives were stationary on one rail, the other train was darted with great speed on the second rail, and the moment it arrived on the bridge it was suddenly stopped, and the waggons spoked. It remained only to ascertain what effect would be produced by the derangement of rails. For this purpose, the rails on one side of the lines were raised to an inclined plane, so that one of their extremities became 20 centimètres elevated above the level of the line. A waggon, weighing, with its load, 10,000 kilogrammes, and propelled at a great speed by an engine, which was detached therefrom at the entering on the bridge—continued its course on the raised rails, and became fixed at the middle of the bridge, where the rails had been taken off. It continued, notwithstanding, its course, but the shock had been so terrible, that the traverses of the waggon were broken. "All these experiments—even the last pushed to such extreme—did not occasion any derangement in the jointing or the *ensemble* of the bridge." The *arcs flèches* determined by these different trials varied from 0·020 mètres to 0·030 mètres. The commission, for the sake of using every precaution, has ordered the bridge to be loaded with a considerable weight, which has to remain a fortnight in its place.

Art improving—Monarchs. [From Goethe.]—The king invited Joseph II. to Fusaro; and *Philipp Hackert* had also to come there with sketches of three pictures. Before dinner the king explained to the emperor the pictures with much energy and taste, so much so, that the queen was surprised, and said to Hackert: "You have well initiated the king into painting, which I am much pleased with. *The good God has sent you to us.* I am enchanted that the king *finds enjoyment* in the fine arts; and this we have to thank you for."

Athletizing of Working Classes.—The free state of Frankfort precedes (it seems) most others of the continent in this respect, as the association for the above purpose counts already 400 members, and arrangements are now completing, for affording youth an opportunity of systematic and *progressive* bodily education (*sic*) in every season and every state of weather. The association have offered themselves to co-operate with the brigades in cases of fire—which, however, to accept has not seemed expedient but under very extraordinary circumstances. Still, even the offer speaks well for the *heart* of these new athletes.

Railroads in Egypt.—The barrage and embankment of the Nile are progressing satisfactorily, and in December last 20,000 persons were employed thereon, working alternately day and night. Ali Pasha, in fact, contemplates great structural improvements in Egypt, which he certainly will carry out if his life be so far prolonged. Amongst these is a railroad from Alexandria to Cairo, another from Suez to Cairo. An embankment of the Nile in Nubia (!) is also spoken of. Thus civilization

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